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# News Release



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## **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REOPENS COMMENT PERIOD FOR SANTA ANA SUCKER CRITICAL HABITAT PROPOSAL AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today it is opening another public comment period on its proposal to designate critical habitat for the federally threatened Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*). Information and comments on the proposed critical habitat rule and draft economic analysis will be accepted until 5:00 pm on November 24, 2004.

The draft economic analysis, which provides a comprehensive overview of past and potential costs associated with conservation activities for the Santa Ana sucker, was made available for initial public review and comment from October 1 through October 12.

Results of the draft analysis estimate potential costs associated with conservation activities for the Santa Ana sucker could range from \$21.8 to \$30.5 million over the next years. Past costs associated with conservation of the species from the time it was listed in 1998 until the present are estimated to be \$4.2 million, with the bulk of these costs associated with transportation projects.

“Given the complexity of information presented in the draft analysis, we want to provide affected stakeholders, scientists, and the public with more time to review and formulate comments,” said Steve Thompson, Manager of the Service’s California/Nevada Operations Office. “We believe a 30-day comment period is necessary to ensure adequate review of the analysis.”

In compliance with a court order, the Service designated critical habitat for the Santa Ana sucker on February 26, 2004. To provide the public with a meaningful opportunity to comment on the designation of critical habitat for this species, the Service published a proposed rule concurrent with the final rule.

Comments and information received by the Service on the proposed rule and draft economic analysis will be used to develop a revised final critical habitat designation. Until such time as a revised final designation is completed, the current critical habitat designation will

remain in effect.

Information about the critical habitat proposal and draft economic analysis is available on the Internet at <http://carlsbad.fws.gov>.

Comments and information on the proposed rule and draft analysis can be submitted in writing to the Field Supervisor, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office, 6010 Hidden Valley Road, Carlsbad, California 92009. Comments and materials may also be sent by facsimile to 760/431-9618 or by electronic mail to [fw1sasur1.fws.gov](mailto:fw1sasur1.fws.gov). If you are sending comments by electronic mail, please use ASCII file format and avoid the use of special characters or encryption. Also, please include "Attn: Santa Ana Sucker Critical Habitat" in the subject line and provide your name and return address in the body of your message.

Comments and information already submitted to the Service during one of the previous comments periods that accompanied the publication of the proposed rule and draft economic analysis do not need to be resent. All previously submitted materials are already part of the supporting record and will be considered in making a revised final critical habitat determination.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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